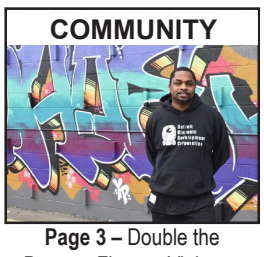
COMMUNITY



Page 3 – Double the Danger: Firearm Violence Among Latinos

EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS

Michigan's #1, Oldest, Largest and Only Bilingual Hispanic News • Free! ¡Gratis! • Vol. 37, #15 • **February 26, 2026**

SPORTS

Page 10 – Shields Wins at LCA

La ciudad de Romulus rechaza futuro centro de detención de ICE

Texto y fotos por Erick Diaz Veliz

Cientos de manifestantes frente al Ayuntamiento de Romulus, choques con contramanifestantes, fuerte presencia policial y políticos demócratas criticando a ICE fueron las escenas que inauguraron la reunión del Concejo Municipal de Romulus el lunes por la noche, cuando el Concejo aprobó por unanimidad una resolución en contra de la nueva instalación de ICE dentro de los límites de la ciudad.

Con carteles anti-ICE y anti-Trump en una mano y megáfonos en la otra, algunos con el rostro cubierto y otros abrigados hasta las orejas, la tranquilidad cotidiana de una reunión del Concejo Municipal de Romulus se vio interrumpida por protestantes que coparon el exterior del edificio municipal, gritando al unísono: "ICE fuera de Romulus".

El centenar de gente se citó al anochecer del 23 de febrero, horas antes de la reunión del Concejo Municipal, para protestar por la nueva adquisición de ICE dentro de los límites de la pequeña ciudad: un almacén de 261,450 pies cuadrados en el 7525 de Cogswell Street destinado a albergar hasta 500

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered Monday evening outside Romulus city hall to protest against the proposed ICE facility within the city.

Continúa en la página 13

City of Romulus Rejects Proposed ICE Detention Center

Story and photos by Erick Diaz Veliz

Hundreds of protesters outside Romulus City Hall, skirmishes with counter-protesters, a heavy police presence, and Democrat politicians criticizing ICE were the scenes that preceded the Romulus City Council meeting on Monday evening when the Council unanimously approved a resolution opposing the new ICE facility within its city limits.

Anti-ICE and anti-Trump signs in one hand, megaphones in the other, some with faces covered and others bundled up to their ears; the typical tranquility of a Romulus City Council meeting was disrupted by hundreds of protesters who crowded the outside of the municipal building, chanting in unison: "ICE out of Romulus."

By early evening on February 23, hundreds had gathered hours before the Romulus City Council meeting to protest ICE's new acquisition within the small city's limits: a 261,450-square-foot warehouse at 7525 Cogswell Street intended to house up to 500 immigrants for processing or deportation.

The confirmation of a future immigrant detention center 6 miles from Detroit

Continues on page 4

Film Review:

Resurgo: The Rise from Within

By Michael Alberts

USA – 1 hour 50 minutes – 2025
Producer/Director/Cinematographer – Stephen McGeeE
Producer – Jessica Care Moore (U.S.)

When Stephen McGee migrated to Detroit from Southern California twenty years ago, Detroit's census figures were "bleeding". McGee came to Detroit to work for the Detroit Free Press in the new genre of "video" production for a traditional newspaper. While McGee parted ways with the Free Press two years after his arrival, he found a place in

Detroit and over the next 18 years amassed three million images and hundreds of hours of video documentation on the City of Detroit and its people.

McGee has taken the body of his work and in collaboration with Producer, Poet Laureate Jessica Care Moore, created an epic and stimulating visual story that explores on multiple levels the century, culminating in the "Resurgo" (a Latin verb that signifies rebirth or recovery from a setback – I RISE).

The documentary features narration from Detroiters who personally experienced the "Resurgo." Their narrative adds to the authenticity of the images and video that appear on the screen. McGee confronts the racial, bankrupt, violent, events that accompanied Detroit with its post-war whip-saw image. The filmmaker revitalizes an abandoned house for his family, enriching his own life in the process.

McGee takes the risk of looking forward and predicting that the events that pushed Detroit downward may be replayed in the tech cities of the western United States. Given the fact that he came to Detroit from California gives him a reasonable base for knowing both diasporas. The visual impact of scenes of Detroit whether in ruin, rebirth, or static keeps the film moving along with the many stories being told by the narrative. The mood is upbeat and brings hope to the audience.

As a lifelong Detroiter, watching several of these scenes was difficult, but the filmmakers' message offers

balance—it is not typical "ruin porn" or a harsh critique of Detroit's decline. Scenes of the Packard Plant and the old Cass Tech falling under the wrecking ball are still hard to witness. This film is a step-up to the reality of the status of Detroit, the motto on Detroit's Great seal, often associated with the flag's historical themes, consists of two Latin phrases penned by Father Gabriel Richard after the Great Fire of 1805: Speramus Meliora: "We hope for better things". & Resurget Cineribus: "It will rise from the ashes".

McGee is still "tinkering" with the film's final edit as he moves from screenings in different venues and cities. This writer believes that Cannes is on the film's Itinerary.

Upcoming Dates for Local Screenings:

March 5 – Royal Oak Emagine – 7:00 PM

March 7 – Farmington Hills Film Festival

Tickets, a teaser and official updates can be found at www.TheDetroitFilm.com.

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3 Community Double the Danger: Firearm Violence Among Latinos

5 Community Community Demands for Accountability Met with Detroit Police Suspensions Over Border Patrol Call

6 Black History Month A Black History Month Tribute to Often Overlooked Afro-Latinos

8 Water Main Break Southwest Detroit's catastrophic water main break 1 year later

10 Sports Claressa Shields Wins at LCA

14 Culturas del Mundo Bolivia

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Double the Danger: Firearm Violence Among Latinos

By Estefania Arellano-Bermudez

Ron Ellis never got the chance to meet his grandmother, Marita Reasonover. She emigrated to the United States from Cuba, eventually settling in Michigan. But she was killed by gun violence on the streets of Southwest Detroit before Ellis was born.

He grew up on the edge of that same neighborhood during the 1980s and witnessed his community struggling with drugs and gang violence.

"It was rough. It was a lot of drugs, a lot of gun violence, gang violence. It was a lot of stuff going on when I grew up," Ellis said.

In the 1980s, Southwest Detroit was ground zero for ongoing gang activity and heavy police presence, including raids. Back then, it was also a patchwork of different cultures tied together by a strong Mexican identity - so much so that the neighborhood began branding itself as "Mexicantown."

Decades later, the violence that shaped Ellis' childhood continues to echo through Latino communities nationwide. A 2023 study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concludes that Latinos are twice as likely to die by firearm violence as their white counterparts. Hispanic Americans ages 15 to 29, while representing roughly four percent of the U.S. population, account for eight percent of all gun homicide victims. Firearm violence is now the leading cause of death for young Hispanic males.

Detroit has seen an historic decline in non-fatal shootings in recent years. However, from 2018 to 2021, firearm homicide rates among Hispanics rose 48%, compared to a 22% increase for white non-Hispanics.

But the numbers are just part of the story. In Southwest Detroit, the response in the aftermath of gun violence speaks to another part: The issues that arise when the trust between a community and the larger institution it belongs to has eroded.

This reality came into focus for the neighborhood in February of 2025. Amid the immigration crackdowns directed by the Trump administration, a 54-inch water main broke, causing massive flooding to streets and homes. Cars were submerged and basements were filled with water in the freezing Michigan winter. As city officials conducted welfare checks in the area, some residents were fearful of opening their doors. In the end, community volunteers stepped in to conduct door-to-door checks to make sure their neighbors had any resources they needed and to translate critical information where necessary.

Those residents' hesitation had everything to do with the fear of immigration crackdowns and the people's lack of trust in institutions, which revealed a larger tension in the community.

"When you break down those basic and foundational community ties, then so many other aspects of a community begin to falter," said Mara Ostfeld, Research Director at the University of Michigan's Center for Racial Justice. "Trust is such a prize and a rare resource right now."

The dynamics that influenced whether the residents of Southwest Detroit were reluctant to open their doors to officials during the water main break – mainly fear and lack of trust – also continue to shape how that community responds to the collective harm of gun violence. Experts agree that community safety depends not only on enforcement, but on relationships.

Cierra Hardaway, Director of Programs at FORCE (Faithfully Organizing Resources for Community Empowerment) Detroit – an advocacy group working toward reducing firearm violence – explains, "It is that love and the trust that we build in the community that just can't be shared with a number."

No one understands that better than a person impacted by firearm violence. Statistics are more than a number. They are the qualitative outcome wrapped up in grief and tucked in a casket.

The lack of trust in institutions within communities like Southwest Detroit has other immediate consequences to safety. "We know people don't trust the police," Ostfeld said. "There are a lot of reasons why people are not going to report [instances of gun violence]. So [available data is] likely an underestimate."

Sam Stragand, Senior Program Manager for the Detroit Partnership on Economic Mobility at Poverty Solutions, notes that Detroiters have a longstanding skepticism toward researchers, which can make it difficult to gain a deep understanding of community needs and challenges or to implement effective strategies to improve outcomes.

"You really have to work to earn Detroiters' trust when you're talking to them," said Stragand. "For so long, people in Detroit… have had their information taken from them without necessarily getting anything in return. And so there's a healthy distrust of researchers."

When people don't trust the system, they don't participate in programs or share information about themselves. They won't seek help. Without trust, prevention strategies falter.

Firearm violence cannot be separated from that context because violence does not emerge in a vacuum. According to the Aspen Institute, firearm violence risk increases when members of a community experience "poverty, living in an area with low social mobility, or being in a historically marginalized group impacted by structural racism." These very conditions have shaped Southwest Detroit for decades.

That was the reality of Ellis' environment as a teenager.

"I was probably like 15," said Ellis. "A friend of mine shot somebody over an argument. It was a fight and he came back and got a gun and shot him."

What began as an argument ended in gunfire. That pattern – a dispute, access to a firearm, and a split-second decision – is one outreach workers say continues to drive violence in the community today.

Southwest Detroit's history of heavy policing in the 1980s left a complicated legacy. For some residents, increased enforcement brought a sense of safety. For others, it deepened an existing skepticism of the systems ostensibly built to protect them. Layer onto that decades of immigration enforcement cycles, economic disinvestment, and housing instability, and the result is a community where the relationship between residents and the institutions that structure their lives can feel uneasy, fragile.

Then it becomes clear that the issues that arise from firearm violence go beyond firearms and beyond violence. They raise important questions about whether all families feel safe calling for help in times of crisis, whether all young people can envision and access options beyond the streets, and whether all communities can believe the systems meant to protect them are working in their interest.

For Ellis, this work is personal.

He once was caught up in the cycle of violence, but he chose to disrupt it and has since been working to help others in his community to break the cycle for good. Connecting with the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation's (DHDC) Community Violence Intervention (CVI) program was the first step. Now, he works for the CVI as an Outreach Specialist.

CVI programs focus on building relationships with individuals at high risk of involvement in firearm violence. Participants receive support with employment, housing, counseling, and mentorship.

Ellis now walks the same neighborhoods where he once saw violence as a constant presence. But instead of watching from the sidelines, he can intervene; as an Outreach Specialist, he can connect young people in Southwest Detroit to the resources they need.

"A lot of the gun violence can be prevented if it is just a better presence, if it's more mentors around," said Ellis. "I had to carry guns around because I didn't feel safe. I felt like I needed to be protected. I didn't feel like the police were protecting us."

Michael Peterson, CVI Program Administrator for the City of Detroit, emphasizes the need for intentional collaboration between city systems and communities to address firearm violence. And Julian Gonzalez, CVI Director at DHDC agrees wholeheartedly.

"If we could get more community involvement, I feel like that would be wonderful," said Gonzalez. "I feel like ultimately gun violence is preventable when we invest in people, not just systems and institutions and organizations."

In Southwest Detroit, reducing firearm violence may depend as much upon city institutions' investment in rebuilding trust with the community as it does upon actually removing guns from the streets. Without a sense of trust, arguments become shootings, and silence keeps the numbers hidden. With it, as Ellis believes, the community can begin to break the cycle of violence.

Ron Ellis at DHDC

This project is supported by a grant from the Association of Health Care Journalists, with funding from the Joyce Foundation.

Estefania Arellano-Bermudez is a Latina freelance writer living in metro Detroit. She is a regular contributor to EL CENTRAL Hispanic News and a member of Planet Detroit's Neighborhood Reporting Lab.

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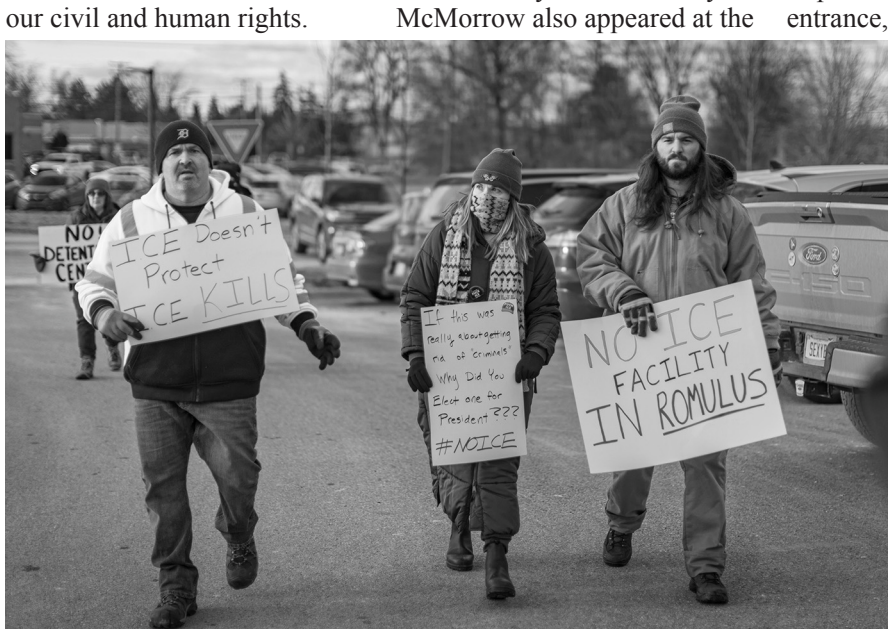
Romulus Rejects Proposed ICE Detention Center

Continued from page 1

Metro Airport and 20 miles from Mexicantown came as a jolt to politicians and residents in Michigan. Political leaders, elected and candidates, and religious leaders joined the sound of drums and whistles from the protest to voice a familiar opposition to the immigration agency.

"We know what happens when ICE detention centers enter communities. Not only does it keep our community less safe, but they are inflicting terror upon our immigrant communities all over the region, and it is draining public resources," State Senator Darrin Camilleri told the crowd.

Camilleri was joined by State Representative Dylan Wegela, who not only called for the abolition and dismantling of ICE but also for the prosecution of those he believes violated our civil and human rights.



Hundreds of demonstrators gathered Monday evening outside Romulus city hall to protest against the proposed ICE facility within the city.

"I don't want a single dollar of my tax money going to an agency that terrorizes neighborhoods, with masks and without warrants. I don't want our hard-earned money going to detention centers that are known for their inhumane conditions and are known for having record deaths last year," Wegela said.

Shortly after the demonstration began, a small group of counter-protesters, carrying a large sign that read "America stands with ICE," quickly approached and tried to reach the center of the protest, shouting their support for ICE, which incited the main group of demonstrators. Among the counter-protesters were Jayden Scott and Gregor Butzow, both Michiganders, who have been disrupting anti-ICE protests, including in Minnesota, by speaking out against immigrants and Muslims and supporting ICE's actions.

Amidst pushing and shoving, organizers tried unsuccessfully to separate them from the group, but part of the crowd was already fueled, leading to insults and physical altercations that continued into the parking lot. During the scuffle, protesters tried to remove the sign supporting ICE, causing Scott to fall. At that moment, half a dozen Romulus police officers dispersed the crowd and removed him from the scene amid shouts of "Nazis, go home!" EL CENTRAL reached out to Romulus Police Department representatives regarding any arrests and how many, but no response had been sent by the time of publication.

U.S. Senate candidates Abdul El-Sayed and Mallory McMorrow also appeared at the scene to show their disapproval alongside the public. Current State Senator McMorrow accused the federal government of using taxes against the community and placing "secret police" within it. "We need to use our voices, because here's what I know: you have elected leaders at every single level, from your city council to the state to the federal level. We do not want this," McMorrow said. Meanwhile, El-Sayed reiterated his stance on abolishing ICE.

Another Democratic politician who criticized the proposed detention center was State Rep. Donavan McKinney (D-Detroit), who charged that residents are living under a fascist government. McKinney, who is also running in Michigan's 13th Congressional District, also accused his opponent and current District 13 Representative Shri Thanedar of supporting laws that favored ICE. And although Thanedar petitioned to prevent the construction of any new ICE facilities in Wayne County, that action did not convince the state representative.

"This man literally voted to thank ICE last summer. He also voted a couple of times to increase the department's budget for ICE. Then he's going to turn around last month to try to act like he really cares," McKinney added.

Later, inside city hall, packed to capacity, local officials unanimously approved a resolution formally opposing the installation of the new ICE detention center within city limits. The meeting began at 7:30pm, and outside, dozens of protesters crowded at the entrance, continuing to shout and bang on the windows, trying to get a seat. Amid cries of "Let us in," at least a dozen Romulus police officers guarded the building.

"I think it's incredibly irresponsible for the federal government to put the burden like this on a smaller, underserved, overburdened community right now," said Romulus Mayor Robert McRaight. "We're continuing to fight as much as we can, and we'll do what we can to make sure this doesn't have a negative impact on our community."

In a letter sent by McRaight to the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, he cited concerns about the location since 7525 Cogswell Street is near residential areas and schools, and the city would be unable to provide public safety resources in the presence of an ICE facility. It further noted that infrastructure requirements of a detention center would prohibit the facility, as it is currently zoned for "light industries" that "have less impact on surrounding uses and generate less truck traffic."

Dozens of protesters wait outside the Romulus city hall to get a seat inside the council meeting.

Packed room at the Romulus city council meeting on Monday evening.

"For all of these reasons, the City of Romulus objects to the existence of an ICE Detention Center and respectfully requests that an ICE Detention Center not be located in the city," concludes the letter, which was also sent on February 16 to local, state, and federal officials.

For "JR" from the No Detention Centers MI organization, the opposition of Romulus residents and authorities towards ICE is plausible, but for him, it will take a lengthy effort to halt the proposal.

"We've seen that ICE is attempting to bypass local elected officials and regulations and pursuing these horrific plans for warehouse detention despite widespread opposition, reflecting the culture of violence and the total lack of transparency that we associate with this agency," JR told EL CENTRAL.

Council members applauded the resolution and expressed that they have had enough. "The message is clear. And if this doesn't send a strong message about how we feel, I don't know what will", said Mayor Pro Tem Tina Talley. "We are exhausting all avenues in this matter." Council member William Wadsworth added that there is no reason for the ICE facility in Romulus. "I have no problem with illegal immigrants being deported with criminal records," he said. "But what I've seen in the past couple of months on TV turns my stomach."

Mayor McRaight concluded that as long as he sits as Romulus mayor, the city won't issue any permit or occupancy certificate for the ICE facility unless they are mandated by a federal judge.

Erick Diaz Veliz is a Peruvian reporter based in Lansing, Michigan. He has documents and reports on cultural, social, and political issues in Peru and Michigan as a freelancer. Erick was born in Lima, Peru, and has been living in Lansing since 2018.

This article [and photos were] was made possible thanks to a generous grant to EL CENTRAL Hispanic News by Press Forward, the national movement to strengthen communities by reinvigorating local news. Learn more at www.pressforward.news.

Wayne County Treasurer's Office Offers Online Options To Help Taxpayers Stay In Their Homes And Keep Their Properties

For Wayne County homeowners and property owners juggling tight budgets, getting reliable tax help quickly can make a big difference. Right now, even though winter weather and major construction can make in-person appointments at the Treasurer's office more challenging, the Wayne County Treasurer Eric R. Sabree offers Wayne County property owner numerous online taxpayer assistance tools that help eligible taxpayers address delinquent property taxes and avoid falling further behind.

You can find information and begin the process for payment plans and related assistance online through the Treasurer's Payment Plans page:

www.waynecountymi.gov/Government/Elected-Officials/Treasurer/Payment-Plans

"We don't want anyone to lose their home or property to foreclosure, and we have taxpayer assistance programs that you can access online to help you," said Wayne County Treasurer Eric Sabree. "The deadline to enroll in these programs is March 31, 2026, so we encourage you to go online or contact us to get started today."

"It's also important to remember that once you enroll in a taxpayer assistance plan, you must continue to make your payments on time, said Treasurer Sabree. "Go online or contact us today to get started. We're here to help."

There are three online assistance programs available to eligible taxpayers:

Stipulated Payment Agreement (REGSPA)

For taxpayers who qualify, REGSPA provides a structured agreement to repay delinquent property taxes over time, helping households move toward compliance through set payment terms.

Distressed Owner/Occupant Extension (DOOE)

DOOE is designed for eligible owner-occupants facing hardship who need additional time to resolve delinquent taxes while working to remain in their homes.

Interest Reduction Stipulated Payment Agreement (IRSPA)

IRSPA offers eligible taxpayers a stipulated payment agreement that may include reduced interest, easing the overall cost of repayment for those who qualify.

How to get started

The Treasurer's Office recommends residents begin online by reviewing program details and eligibility requirements as soon as possible, then completing the appropriate application through the Payment Plans page. Having basic property and tax notice information available can help speed up the process. The deadline to be enrolled in an assistance plan is March 31, so it's important to start the process as soon as possible.

Need help choosing the right option?

Residents with questions about eligibility, required documentation, or the application process can contact the Treasurer's Office directly:

Phone: (313) 224-5990

Email: taxinfo@waynecountymi.gov or wctopaymentplans@waynecountymi.gov

Online: www.waynecountymi.gov/Government/Elected-Officials/Treasurer/Payment-Plans

Wayne County Treasurer's Eric Sabree

In addition to online assistance programs, the Wayne County Treasurer's website, www/waynecountymi.gov/treasurer, also offers information about:

- Paying or Checking Taxes Online
- Making an Appointment
- Applying for a Hardship Extension
- Finding Payment Options
- Auctions & Claims Information
- Property Tax Info
- Looking up your Property Tax Bill
- Community Partners Assistance
- Frequently Asked Questions
- FOIA Requests (Freedom of Information Act)
- Deed Certification Process

NOTE: hyperlinks to the above services can also be found in this article posted at www.elcentralmedia.com

For more assistance you can call or contact the Wayne County Treasurer's office at:

Phone: (313) 224-5990

Email: taxinfo@waynecountymi.gov

Community Demands for Accountability Met With Detroit Police Suspensions Over Border Patrol Call

Tension filled the February 19th Board of Police Commission meeting, as many upset residents attended in person and others voiced their frustration online. After meeting in executive session, the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners voted unanimously to suspend two officers who called the U.S. Border Patrol during a recent traffic stop. While the community is calling for the officers to be fired, a complicated legal dispute is already underway, making it harder for the department to respond quickly.

The incident resulted in two people being detained in Southwest Detroit and caused strong reactions, especially in District 6, where many immigrants live. The board voted 10-0 to place Sgt. Denise Wallet and Officer James Corsy on unpaid leave for 30 days. They will keep their medical benefits while the investigation continues.

However, the narrative surrounding the Feb. 9 incident has recently taken a turn. Detroit police Sgt. Denise Wallet, a 27-year veteran of the Detroit Police Department, filed a lawsuit, arguing that her unpaid suspension violates her due process rights.

The lawsuit says Wallet did not call federal agents to enforce immigration law. According to the complaint, Wallet says she called the U.S. Border Patrol "solely for the purpose of identifying the individual who was in custody, not to enforce immigration law or to inquire into the subject's immigration status." The lawsuit also claims she made the call only after her lieutenant told her to, and that she did not know the person's immigration status.

For some residents, a 30-day unpaid suspension is not enough. They were demanding immediate termination, arguing that any collaboration with federal immigration agencies blatantly violates Detroit Police Department policy and continues the already fragile trust between law enforcement and the city's immigrant neighborhoods.

"We have a big issue of mistrust in our community with the police and increasing that trust with our community begins by holding police officers accountable," Guadalupe A., a resident of Southwest Detroit, urged the board.

"Detroit police officers are here to work for the citizens in the community, not to work for the federal government."

During public comment, residents demanded accountability and noted that rules preventing DPD from acting as federal law enforcement have been in place for some time. Some community members said that because Sgt. Wallet has worked for so long, she should have known better.

Alexis E., District 6 resident and member of the grassroots collective The People's Assembly, pointed out how these incidents affect public safety.

"Day by day, our community, and especially in Southwest Detroit, is afraid to call the cops for any help," he said. "If the board wants to build that relationship with the community and the police...we need to get rid of all the police officers that's not protecting or serving."

The Detroit Board of Police Commissioners meets every Thursday

Despite the public pressure to terminate the officers, the department's leadership appears to be walking back its initial hardline stance. Chief of Police Todd A. Bettison originally intended to fire both officers. However, Bettison is now stating that he is satisfied with 30-day suspensions.

When pressed on what the department is doing to uncover other potential instances of non-compliance, Detroit Police Deputy Franklin Hayes assured the board that DPD is ramping up its internal oversight. Hayes noted that the department is reinforcing the "duty to intervene" policy and increasing audits of body-worn and in-car cameras from the command level down to frontline supervisors.

To help build trust and transparency, Hayes announced that DPD will host a procedural justice and police forum on Saturday, March 7th, at the SAY Detroit Play Center, located at 19320 Van Dyke Ave. in Northeast Detroit.

"...To strengthen the relationship between policing and the needs of the community, community members are encouraged to voice their concerns and learn the procedures police use to accomplish and carry out their duties," Hayes said.

For more information, updates, and meeting schedule visit: https://detroitmi.gov/government/boards/board-police-commissioners

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Amber Ogden is a Detroit-based freelance journalist and EL CENTRAL reporter, covering the vital intersections of arts, culture, and community in Southwest Detroit. As a Detroit native, she has had her work appear in The Michigan Chronicle, Visit Detroit, Outlier Media, and Eater Detroit. When she isn't documenting the happenings of Detroit, she can be found exploring the city's culinary scene or visiting a local art gallery. Follow her work at amberogden.com.

This article was made possible thanks to a generous grant to EL CENTRAL Hispanic News by Press Forward, the national movement to strengthen communities by reinvigorating local news. Learn more at www.pressforward.news.

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EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS

A Black History Month Tribute to Often Overlooked Afro-Latinos

By Juanita Zuniga and Michael D. Gutierrez

The full story of who we are as Latinos has never been easy to tell. Too often our diversity gets flattened, and the Black faces that have always been part of our community get pushed to the margins. From the barrios of the Bronx to the streets of Southwest Detroit, Afro-Latinos have shaped this country's culture, politics, and future in ways that rarely get acknowledged.

This photo spread is our small effort to change that. Some of the people featured here are known worldwide. Others are doing the quiet, essential work right here in our communities. What connects them is a refusal to be unseen and a deep commitment to the people around them.

POLITICS & CIVIL RIGHTS

Pedro Albizu Campos — Anti-colonial leadership, Puerto Rican independence movement

Antonia Pantoja — Education reform, Latino civil rights advocacy

Monteze Morales — Local government leadership, education equity policy

EDUCATION, HISTORY & SCHOLARSHIP

Arturo Alfonso Schomburg — Black historical preservation, Harlem Renaissance intellectual leadership

Elizabeth Acevedo — Young adult literature, poetry in classrooms, Afro-Latina identity representation

MUSIC & CULTURAL IMPACT

Wilie Colón — Urban salsa movement, Afro-Caribbean musical preservation, Nuyorican identity

Celia Cruz — Afro-Cuban music, salsa globalization, Black identity in Latin music

Amara La Negra — Music, television, Afro-Latina visibility and anti-colorism advocacy

FILM, MEDIA & STORYTELLING

Jharrel Jerome — Film and television acting, Afro-Latino representation in cinema

Felipe Luciano — Broadcast journalism, spoken word movement

Janel Martinez — Digital journalism, Afro-Latina identity storytelling

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP & FOOD JUSTICE

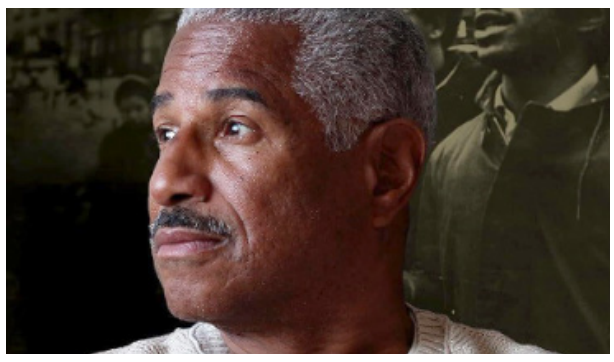
Angela Lugo-Thomas — Urban agriculture, food sovereignty, community empowerment in Detroit

Willie Colón (1950 – 2026) was a Bronx-born, Puerto Rican-heritage musician, composer, trombonist, producer, and activist whose life work helped define urban salsa and Afro-Caribbean music in the United States. Over more than five decades, he fused jazz, rock, funk, and traditional Afro-Latin rhythms into a sound rooted in barrio experience and cultural pride, releasing more than 40 albums and selling millions of records worldwide. His collaborations with legends like Héctor Lavoe and Rubén Blades — especially the landmark album Siembra — brought salsa into the global spotlight and infused it with social and political consciousness. Colón also used his platform for community advocacy and civil rights work in New York. He died peacefully on February 21, 2026, at age 75, leaving a legacy as one of the most influential voices in Afro-Latino music and cultural life.

Celia Cruz (1925–2003), born Úrsula Hilaria Celia de la Caridad Cruz Alfonso in Havana, Cuba, was one of the most powerful voices in Afro-Latin music history. Rising to fame in the 1950s as the lead singer of Sonora Matancera, she helped bring Afro-Cuban rhythms like son, guaracha, and later salsa to audiences across Latin America and the United States. After leaving Cuba in 1960, she built a groundbreaking career in New York, becoming a central figure in the salsa movement and recording 37 studio albums over five decades. With her signature cry of "¡Azúcar!" she celebrated African roots in Latin music at a time when Black identity was often minimized or erased. Cruz won two Grammy Awards and four Latin Grammys, but beyond the trophies, she opened doors for Afro-Latinos in the music industry and showed the world that our culture — loud, proud, and rooted in Africa — belongs on the main stage.

Arturo Alfonso Schomburg (1874–1938) was an Afro–Puerto Rican historian, writer, and collector whose life's work changed how Black history is preserved and understood in the United States. Born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, he moved to New York as a teenager and dedicated himself to proving that people of African descent had shaped world history in powerful ways. At a time when many textbooks ignored Black contributions, Schomburg collected thousands of books, letters, artworks, and rare documents connected to Africa and the African diaspora in the Caribbean and the Americas. In 1911, he co-founded the Negro Society for Historical Research and wrote for major Black publications like The Crisis and Opportunity, sharing research that challenged racist myths. His personal collection later became the foundation of what is now the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem.

Pedro Albizu Campos (1891–1965) was a Puerto Rican lawyer and political leader who dedicated his life to fighting U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico. After studying engineering and law at Harvard University, he returned home and became president of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party in 1930. Under his leadership, the party organized rallies, labor support efforts, and public campaigns calling for full independence, not limited reforms. He strongly opposed the forced military draft of Puerto Ricans into the U.S. Army and publicly denounced economic policies that kept the island dependent on U.S. sugar corporations. His speeches helped awaken pride in Puerto Rico's African and Indigenous roots at a time when Black identity was often pushed aside. Following clashes between Nationalists and police – including the 1937 Ponce Massacre, where police killed unarmed demonstrators – Albizu Campos was imprisoned for many years on charges of sedition. To many in our community, he remains a symbol of resistance as a man who demanded dignity, self-determination, and justice for Puerto Ricans, even when it cost him his freedom and health.



Felipe Luciano (born 1947) is an Afro–Puerto Rican poet, journalist, and community leader whose work helped shape Latino and Black political movements in New York City. Born and raised in East Harlem, Luciano became a founding member and chairman of the Young Lords in the late 1960s, transforming the group from a street organization into a powerful movement demanding better housing, healthcare, education, and self-determination for Puerto Ricans. The Young Lords organized garbage cleanups to protest city neglect, fought for lead testing in children, and pushed hospitals to provide language access and community accountability. Luciano also helped found the spoken-word group The Last Poets, using poetry as a tool of resistance and cultural pride during the rise of the Black Power era. Later, he broke barriers in media, becoming one of the first Puerto Rican television news anchors in the United States and winning two Emmy Awards for investigative journalism in New York. In his 2023 memoir, Flesh and Spirit: Confessions of a Young Lord, Luciano reflects on his early life, incarceration, and journey toward political awakening.

Angela Lugo-Thomas is an Afro-Boricua community leader born in Puerto Rico and raised in the Detroit area who has become a powerful voice for food justice and neighborhood empowerment. As a garden development manager at Keep Growing Detroit, she works directly with residents in Detroit and Highland Park to build and sustain community gardens, expand access to fresh produce, and promote food sovereignty in neighborhoods that have long faced disinvestment. Lugo-Thomas often speaks about the connection between land, culture, and identity, and about navigating her Black and Puerto Rican heritage in a city that is predominantly African American. Through organizing, education, and hands-on support for urban farmers, she helps families grow their own food and reclaim green space. In our communities, her leadership represents more than gardening — it's about dignity, self-reliance, and building healthier neighborhoods from the ground up.

Editor's Note: A complete bibliography of the sources for the profiles can be found in our online post at www.elcentralmedia.com

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EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS

“Music and Dance Rooted in Afro-Latinidad”

Ballet Folklórico de Wayne State University hosted “Music and Dance Rooted in Afro-Latinidad” in honor of Black History Month. BFWSU invited special guests Professor Ozzie Rivera and Ricanstruction for a second year in a row. This event highlighted and informed guests about music and dance in Latin America that has its roots in Africa. The Afro Latino experience in our homelands is oftentimes erased, although our music and dances are heavily rooted in Africa. For this reason, BFWSU has organized this event in honor of Black History Month to educate others.

Professor Ozzie Rivera, a professor at both Wayne State University and the University of Michigan, began the event with an insightful and informative lecture that highlighted music and dance in Latin American countries with African roots. In his lecture, he highlighted dance and music forms from Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, the Caribbean, Central America, Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay. He also highlighted Puerto Rico’s early contributions to jazz.

Dancer from Ricanstruction dancing to bomba | Photo credit to the Ballet Folklorico de Wayne State University.

Following his lecture, Ricanstruction, which was founded by Ozzie Rivera, filled the room with lively sounds of bomba. Ricanstruction is a music/dance group that performs bomba- Afro-puertorican drumming and dance. Members led guests in song and dance as the group formed a batey.

To end the evening, Ballet Folklórico de Wayne State University’s dancers presented on African heritage and influence in Mexico through a presentation & dances, specifically within the state of Veracruz. BFWSU dancers spoke about Gaspar Yanga, a Central African man who led a successful rebellion of enslaved Africans in the highlands of Veracruz against the Spanish. They highlighted the genre of Son Jarocho that has a profound African influence embedded in its syncopated rhythms, call and response vocal structures, and the use of percussive dance on a wooden platform. BFWSU closed out with simulating a fandango (community gathering of music and dancing that reflects African social, musical, and dance traditions), led by Veronica Beltran who shared her experience at a fandango in Tlacotalpan, Veracruz & who is also studying a Bachelor’s in Artistic Education with an Emphasis in Dance at an institute in Veracruz.

Group picture with event guests and members of Ballet Folklórico de Wayne State University and Ricanstruction

Veronica Beltran explaining the pieces of the Sotavento vestuario

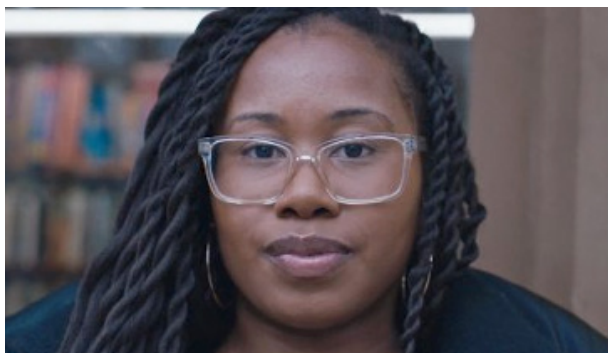
Continued from page 6

Elizabeth Acevedo (born 1988) is an Afro-Dominican poet and novelist from New York City whose work has reshaped young adult literature by centering Afro-Latina voices. A former National Poetry Slam champion, she first built her reputation through spoken word before bringing that same rhythm and honesty to the page. Her award-winning novel The Poet X won the National Book Award and tells the story of a Dominican teen in Harlem wrestling with faith, family, body image, and her own voice. Through books like With the Fire on High, Clap When You Land, and Beastgirl & Other Origin Myths, Acevedo writes about immigration, language, sisterhood, grief, and belonging in ways that feel real to today’s generation. She has helped make poetry feel urgent and accessible in classrooms across the country, giving young Afro-Latinas the chance to see themselves not as side characters, but as the center of their own stories.

Amara La Negra (born Diana Danelys De Los Santos) is an Afro-Dominican singer, actress, and television personality who has used her platform to confront colorism and anti-Blackness within Latino culture. Raised in Miami by Dominican immigrant parents, she began performing as a child on the long-running variety show Sábado Gigante, building her career from an early age. She later gained national attention on Love & Hip Hop: Miami, where she openly challenged narrow beauty standards and spoke about the discrimination darker-skinned Latinas often face in the entertainment industry. Through her music, media appearances, and public advocacy, Amara has pushed back against the idea that Latinidad has one look. For many Afro-Latina women, her visibility in mainstream U.S. media has mattered — she represents pride in African roots, confidence in natural hair and features, and the right to define ourselves on our own terms.

Antonia Pantoja (1922–2002) was a Puerto Rican educator, social worker, feminist, and civil rights leader who transformed opportunities for Latino youth in the United States. After moving to New York City in 1944, she became deeply involved in labor organizing, community advocacy, and efforts to improve public education for Puerto Rican families. In 1961, she founded ASPIRA of New York, a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing leadership, pride, and academic success among Latino students at a time when many faced discrimination, language barriers, and low expectations in schools. ASPIRA chapters grew across the country, helping thousands of young people pursue higher education and civic engagement. Pantoja believed our youth deserved not just access, but dignity and a strong sense of cultural identity. In 1996, she became the first Puerto Rican woman to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Jharrel Jerome (born 1997) is a Bronx-born actor and rapper of Dominican heritage who has become one of the most important Afro-Latino voices in contemporary film and television. He first gained attention with a supporting role in the Academy Award–winning film Moonlight, but his breakthrough came in Ava DuVernay’s Netflix series When They See Us, where he portrayed Korey Wise, one of the wrongfully convicted Central Park Five. In 2019, Jerome made history as the first Afro-Latino to win a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Limited Series or Movie for that role. Known for choosing projects that highlight injustice, identity, and the complexity of young men of color, Jerome has consistently centered authentic storytelling.



Janel Martinez is a Bronx-based writer, communications specialist, and proud Afro-Honduran of Garífuna descent whose work centers the voices of Afro-Latinas often left out of mainstream conversations. She is the founder of the award-winning digital platform Ain’t I Latina?, created to highlight the diversity, history, and lived experiences of Afro-Latinas through journalism, interviews, and community storytelling. At a time when Latinidad is often portrayed as racially uniform, Martinez built a space that openly addresses anti-Blackness, identity, and cultural pride within Latino communities. In 2021, she contributed to the anthology Wild Tongues Can’t Be Tamed: 15 Voices from the Latinx Diaspora, helping spark deeper dialogue about race, language, and belonging across the diaspora.

Monteze Morales is a community leader, public servant, and education advocate who has dedicated more than 20 years to advancing equity and student well-being in Michigan. Of Afro–Puerto Rican descent, Morales moved to Kalamazoo with her family at just five years old and has proudly called the city home ever since. As an education consultant, she has worked closely with schools and community partners to support inclusive learning environments and empower families. She made history as the first Afro-Latina of Puerto Rican heritage elected to the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners, bringing lived experience and cultural perspective to local government.

‘We can’t wait for the city to just save us’: Southwest Detroit’s catastrophic water main break 1 year later

In Southwest Detroit, a year after a devastating 54-inch water main break displaced hundreds, residents face ongoing challenges.

By Ethan Bakuli for Planet Detroit – Republished with permission

Overview:

- “As far as me and my household, it’s not the same as what it was,” says Southwest Detroit resident Erica Brown, who lives in the neighborhood where a 54-inch water main ruptured one year ago.
- Last year’s transmission main break “changed how we assess and prioritize risk across the system,” says Peter Fromm, director of water transmission at GLWA.
- Read Planet Detroit’s tips for civic engagement on water infrastructure in Metro Detroit. See shaded box next page.

When chest-high waters receded from Lexington Street one year ago, Erica Brown hesitated to step outside into the single-digit temperatures.

“It looked like a beach, a mini beach,” remembers Brown, who looked out the window of her two-story house as water from a 54-inch water main break submerged the cars and homes of Brown and her neighbors.

“It was very hard, very sudden, very quick, very unstoppable,” she said. “You couldn’t even stop this stuff from happening, because the water was just overpowering everything.”

The scene played out last February in Southwest Detroit, where hundreds of residents like Brown were impacted by one of the worst water main breaks in recent city history.

Houses went without power or heat for days. Appliances and vehicles were totaled. The water main break area encompassed around 400 houses, and roughly 300 residents were displaced and moved into hotels.

A year later, residents and local organizers say the totality of the incident – from financial losses to health concerns – prolonged the recovery process.

“As far as me and my household, it’s not the same as what it was,” said Brown.

Flooded families ‘still to this day have not been able to be made whole’

For Brown, the worst reminders of the water main break are the objects she’s unable to replace, such as her washer and dryer, her downstairs shower room, and countless family photos and belongings stored in the basement.

“I’ve lost memories over the years from all my kids, my sisters — our baby pictures were down there,” she said.

In the days after the main burst on Feb. 17, then-Mayor Mike Duggan and other city officials promised a speedy recovery, outlining a plan that involved inspectors assessing damages in a matter of days and conducting repairs within weeks.

The 54-inch water main break was described as an “infrastructure failure” by the Great Lakes Water Authority, which oversaw the repair process in collaboration with the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department. Both utilities urged residents to file insurance claims as soon as possible for reimbursement of damaged property.

Nearly $12 million went toward repairs, restoration and recovery efforts tied to the water main break, including cleaning and sanitizing basements, installing new furnaces and hot water tanks, and conducting electric and plumbing repairs, said Kierra Smith, a DWSD spokesperson.

“The city response to this event spanned multiple departments and agencies which provided support services for several months,” Smith said in an email.

Detroit City Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero said it’s hard for many Southwest Detroit residents to call the response to last year’s water main break a success. Many of her District 6 constituents who live in the flood zone “still to this day have not been made whole” by the city’s efforts, she said.

“The fact that people lost things that are meaningful to them, that could not be repaired – cars, completely renovated basements – all of that is terrible, and there’s just different levels of trauma and pain and repair work that still needs to be done,” Santiago-Romero said.

Residents rescued during the flooding. Photo from Facebook

While crews took some families out of their houses in rafts, Brown was among the residents who bunkered inside until conditions improved.

Brown chose to stay inside because she didn’t want to overwhelm her children, she said. Instead, they huddled around their heater until night fell, the heat went out, and they needed to relocate to a hotel.

The split in the 54-inch water main in Southwest Detroit in February 2025. Photo courtesy of the Great Lakes Water Authority.

GLWA: Water main break ‘disrupted lives and displaced families’

While Detroit’s water department oversees over 2,700 miles of water mains across the city, the Great Lakes Water Authority manages the larger transmission main that burst in Southwest Detroit last February.

Since 2016, the city of Detroit has leased its regional water and sewage infrastructure to GLWA, with the regional water authority paying yearly to replace and rehabilitate DWSD’s aging system. Altogether, GLWA maintains over 800 miles of transmission mains across Southeast Michigan, including Detroit, which operates smaller service lines that feed into households and businesses across the city.

Last year’s transmission main break “changed how we assess and prioritize risk across the system,” said Peter Fromm, director of water transmission at GLWA.

The water main break can be pinpointed to an “unprecedented weld failure” in the nearly 100-year-old, 54-inch steel main, added Fromm.

“We are now more explicitly weighing the consequences of failure — particularly in densely populated areas — alongside traditional measures of likelihood of failure.”

Water main breaks are a threat in Metro Detroit, where aging infrastructure is tested by subzero temperatures.

Many water transmission mains, including the one in Southwest, are nearly a century old and require significant replacement and rehabilitation, according to GLWA documents.

Experts have previously told Planet Detroit the rapid change between hot and cold periods could be increasing with human-caused climate change, leading to more burst pipes.

While the water main at the intersection of Rowan and Beard streets is repaired, it remains out of service for the foreseeable future.

The water authority is preparing to launch a pilot program that will use electromagnetic technology to inspect the conditions of steel pipes across its system. The program is set to start in March.

Last month, DWSD reported 51 water main breaks across the city’s system. At a Jan. 27 news conference about the recent breaks, DWSD Director Gary Brown said it’s difficult to compare them to last year’s water main break in Southwest Detroit.

“The sheer fact that we have these temperatures for the next seven to 10 days and we have to travel and mobilize crews citywide … makes it somewhat challenging and slows us down,” he said.

House repairs, health problems linger 1 year later

Since the frozen waters receded and the contractors and repair crews moved on, residents are still figuring out how to move forward, with limited means and resources.

“You’re already struggling to repair your house and then this monumental flood happens,” said Christine Bell, executive director of Urban Neighborhood Initiatives. “We’ve seen pictures of people’s houses, and sometimes when you look at the house, you’re like, ‘did that all happen because of the flood, or is part of that deferred maintenance on your (the homeowner’s) part?’”

Nearly one-third of residents in the area in which the water main break occurred live below the poverty line, with a per capita income of $19,100, according to Census data.

Resident Brown said she encountered challenges with filing a claim: she did not keep receipts of the things she lost, and the filing deadline came and went while many residents were staying at hotels.

Brown doesn’t have enough money to buy new household appliances, she said; she stays at home to take care of her youngest daughter. The money Brown received from the flood claim went toward replacing her car, she said.

Today, when Brown needs to do multiple loads of laundry for her family, she brings them to her sister’s house.

DWSD’s Smith said no cap existed on claim settlements for residents.

“Settlements were offered based on the documentation provided by the claimant. All claimants had the opportunity to follow-up with supporting documentation if they believed their settlement offer did not reflect their claim demand,” the spokesperson said.

“All basement cleaning and sanitizing requests” were addressed by the city, she said, adding there were “some unrelated home plumbing issues that caused basement flooding” after the water main break and early basement cleanings that “could not be addressed using city resources.”

Rachel Marquez, a community organizer with the Detroit Hispanic Development Corp. (DHDC), said other short- and

long-term problems became clearer in the weeks and months after the main break. DHDC is one of the primary groups that responded during the crisis.

In a text message survey DHDC conducted with 102 residents, 57% of respondents said they got sick shortly after the water main break, whether dealing with respiratory issues, bad allergies from mold, or autoimmune flare ups.Anxiety and sadness are the most glaring health problems, Marquez said.

"Mental health was a big thing that we are still seeing the effects of from the flood," Marquez said. "There was a payout, but there wasn't any sort of mental health healing in the aftermath."

ICE arrests prompt fear during emergency response

The water main break not only caused damage to people's homes and valuables, but heightened other pressing community concerns, such as the threat of deportations during the second Trump administration.

"We started the year with know your rights (trainings)," said Laura Chavez, the president of the Southwest Detroit Business Association at the time of the main break.

"Do not answer the door. Do not let anybody in. Carry your red card so you know what your rights are if you get pulled over by Border Patrol or ICE."

In the days after the main break, rescue crews made up of firefighters, city workers, and police officers went house-to-house conducting wellness checks, community organizers told Planet Detroit.

Seeing law enforcement stoked people's fears, said Chavez, and prompted some residents to stay home.

The area where the water main break occurred is 75% Hispanic, with a quarter of residents being foreign-born.

"There were people living in their car because they were afraid to leave their house," said Chavez.

"Undocumented people were afraid to do anything because they didn't know what was going to happen. Then you had renters that felt like they had no rights at all."

Alyssa Avila, communications director for Urban Neighborhood Initiatives, said many households "refused to evacuate" until local, Spanish-speaking volunteers came with care packages, including a family of nine she met.

"The grandmother was like, 'I haven't slept for three days' and they had a little 2-year-old," Avila recalls. "It could have been sad.

Residents, organizers criticize city response

For DHDC's Marquez, last year's water main break marked the first time she's organized in an emergency of that scale. While she said she learned a lot about collaborating with the city, she's learned more about the "power of community working with each other to fix" problems.

"We can't wait for the city to just save us or offer these services," said Marquez.

"It really took organizers and volunteers to come and get residents what they needed. If we weren't all there, this could have ended completely differently."

Mutual aid efforts organized by local residents and businesses ultimately played a major role in the post-break recovery, providing cases of water, clothes, toiletries, and pet food in mass quantities.

While Brown said she's thankful her children are safe, it's difficult to find relief one year later.

"There's water bursts still happening all around Metro Detroit. It's repeated itself," she said. "Even when it rains, our house gets flooded … it's like the house is crying. The basement is crying."

Repairs on a broken 54-inch water main in Southwest Detroit in February 2025. Photo courtesy of the Great Lakes Water Authority.

The flood waters ran deep. Photo from Facebook

Forgotten Harvest Mobile Food Market at LA SED providing support following the water main break

What's next?

Tips for civic action and why it matters

Water main breaks occur year-round and increase rapidly when there are drastic changes in temperature, such as extreme heat or cold. The 54-inch water main break in Southwest Detroit is among the worst incidents of its kind in recent history and illustrates water infrastructure challenges across Southeast Michigan.

Who's making civic decisions

The Great Lakes Water Authority manages the water main that burst in Southwest Detroit last February, and the Detroit Water and Sewage Department oversees smaller mains across the city.

How to take civic action now

- Attend GLWA's monthly Board of Directors meetings and/or DWSD's monthly Board of Water Commissioners meetings to keep track of both agencies' efforts to address Detroit's aging water infrastructure. Alternatively, follow Detroit Documenters' past and future coverage of DWSD and GLWA meetings.
- Follow Urban Neighborhood Initiatives and Detroit Hispanic Development Corp. for future programming related to the February 2025 water main break and flooding in Southwest Detroit.
- Call DWSD's main hotline at 313-267-8000, in the event of a water or sewer emergency, or use the Improve Detroit mobile/online app to report a water main break, service leak, sink hole or other issues.
- Mail written comments about water main breaks or other water infrastructure issues to Suzanne R. Coffey, CEO, Great Lakes Water Authority, 735 Randolph, Detroit, MI 48226.
- Ask your local officials and board members at GLWA and DWSD how they are addressing water infrastructure problems in your community.

Civic impact

Following and weighing in on how city and regional utilities address water infrastructure challenges could influence the trajectory of future water or sewage emergencies like the one that devastated a Southwest Detroit neighborhood in February 2025. Please send a quick email to connect@planetdetroit.org to let us know what action you took.

Ethan Bakuli reported this story while participating in USC Annenberg's Center for Climate Journalism and Communication and Center for Health Journalism 2025 Health and Climate Change Reporting Fellowship. Bakuli joins the team after covering education and community issues for Chalkbeat Detroit and working as a freelance journalist reporting on race and labor issues. Before launching his career as a reporter, he taught high school students how to produce audio and visual stories about their communities, an experience that cemented his belief in the power of community-led journalism.

Shields Wins at Little Cearsers Arena

EL CENTRAL
HISPANIC NEWS
SPORTS
Sports Editor: Dan Graschuck/ EL CENTRAL

Photos by Bob Ryder (fightnews.com)

Salita Promotions and WYNN Records brought pro boxing to the LCA (Little Cearsers Arena), in front of more than 17,000 fans.

Clarresa Sheilds defeated Franchon Crews-Dezurn, by unanimous decision in a 10 round bout.

Highlights from the other 11 bouts and undercard shown below

Claressa Shields (left, 18-0, 3KOs) defeated Franchon Crews-Dezurn (right, 10-3, 2KOs) by unanimous decision, winning all 10 rounds on judges cards, for the undisputed heavyweight world championship

Claressa Shields and Franchon Crews-Dezurn celebrate after fight

Daniels Perkins (left, 6-1, 3KOs) defeated Che Kenneally (right, 5-1, 2KOs) by KO (1:45), to win the WBA light heavyweight world title

Lance Smith (right, from Super Bad Gym, 6-0, 5KOs) defeated Jorge Vizcarrondo (left, 2-2-2, 2KOs) by TKO 3rd round (1:54)

Jasmine Hampton (right, from Super Bad Gym, 2-0, 2KOs) defeated Agustina Vazquez (left, 6-7-2, 1KO) by TKO 5th round (0:36)

Savannah Tini (left, from Nu Way Gym, 7-0, 2KOs) defetead Vaida Masiokaite (right, 11-30-6, 1KO) by unanimous decision

Three Favorites Prepare For The World Cup

EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS Pateando la No. 5
SPORTS

David Levine
EL CENTRAL

Spain, Argentina, and England will be on everybody's list of contenders for this summer's World Cup. All three are past champions, but Spain and Argentina can claim more recent success than England. A World Cup on a neutral continent gives all three the opportunity for a lengthy run in the competition. How they deal with the weather and travel across multiple times zones may go a long way to determining whether or not they are in Met Life Stadium for the final or not.

To that end, many teams have begun their preparations by selecting training sites. Interestingly, England and Argentina have decided to base themselves in Kansas City. Spain picked a more out of the way location in Chattanooga, Tennessee, two hours drive from the Mercedes Benz Stadium where they will play two group matches and potentially some elimination matches.

Spain has the top billing in Group H. They will open their run at the title with games against newcomers Cape Verde, 2034 Hosts Saudi Arabia, and two-time champions Uruguay. None of Spain's current squad would be considered global superstars, but they are built around the some of the world's top young talents. It will come as no surprise that FC Barcelona has a number of representatives, but it is worth noting that several key players are now in the English Premier League.

Arsenal's Martin Zubimendi and Mikel Merino are two of the world's best in midfield. Merino can also step forward into the front line as a striker in a pinch and has produced key goals for the Gunners as they challenge for their first title in over twenty years. Barcelona's renowned academy has also contributed the likes of Pedri and Gavi to the national team, as well as forward Ferran Torres. However, the player who could gain the most this summer is teenage forward Lamine Yamal. With attention focused on more established stars, this could be his time to do what Kylian Mbappe did for France in 2018.

The Spanish team has excellent balance. They are defensively strong with three top class goalkeepers and defenders who are comfortable with the ball and applying physical challenges to protect their goal. They should not have any trouble winning the group.

Uruguay will be Spain's toughest opponent in the first round. This is not the Uruguay of Edinson Cavani and Luis Suarez, though. They will be more workmanlike. This is a team that never shies away from a physical battle and will make things difficult. Their games won't have many goals. Their strength likes in a suffocating midfield which will be pushed to press and create turnovers under the guidance of Argentine legend Marcelo Bielsa.

Cape Verde and Saudi Arabia will hope to spring a shock somewhere in the group phase. Cape Verde has qualified for the first time and would be the smallest nation among the forty-eight if not for Curacao. Like many smaller nations, they will rely heavily on expatriates to make up their roster. In contrast, Saudi Arabia will bring an almost entirely home-based squad. They will be hoping their players have benefited from playing beside the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema, and other stars imported to take advantage of the endless supply of oil money in their domestic league.

Argentina, having given Lionel Messi the thrill of winning a World Cup near the end of his career, now have to defend that title with the legend even closer to the end of his incredible era. In Qatar, Lionel Scaloni surrounded Messi with an athletic group that could do the defensive work a man short. For all his remarkable abilities, Messi has reached a stage where he doesn't chase back defensively like he did for Barcelona a decade ago. That reality has forced some adjustments for the champions.

Scaloni still has plenty of skilled players to fit into his squad. His depth is the envy of most other managers. In attack, Julian Alvarez of Atletico Madrid and Lautaro Martinez of Internazionale Milan would walk into most other starting sides. One is likely to sit on the bench behind Messi. Or, to rest Messi against the weak group J opponents, he could play the younger stars. Midfield will be a strong area, too. With Liverpool's Alexis MacAllister and former MLS star Thiago Almada among the options, there will be a group of all-rounders who can provide deft skills and hard tackling.

It's hard to imagine Argentina could have been handed an easier draw than what they received from FIFA this time around. Algeria, Austria, and Jordan simply don't have the players to push Argentina for the top spot. It might be quite a battle for the second spot. Austria look decent on paper, but the heat and humidity of the American summer favor Algeria and Jordan. Given Messi's global following, Argentina will have a lot of support from neutral and host country ticket buyers.

Will this finally be the year that England backs up its boasts by reclaiming the World Cup? Thomas Tuchel's squad certainly has all the weapons. The domestic league is easily Europe's strongest and richest. England's players face off against some of the best players from around the world on a weekly basis. Occasionally, a few of them leave the island and venture to the Continent to test their mettle. Such is the talent at Tuchel's fingertips that he can contemplate leaving Real Madrid star Jude Bellingham on the bench at the World Cup in favor of someone like Aston Villa's Morgan Rogers, who has been one of the Premier League's most exciting players this season.

Tuchel, a German who has managed numerous clubs including Chelsea, will have one major concern ahead of the summer. He has to hope that striker Harry Kane survives Bayern Munich's season without injury. For all the depth in the Premier League, England has no established second striker. Maybe Newcastle's Anthony Gordon could fill in as a false nine or oft-injured Callum Wilson of West Ham could be there as cover. Aston Villa's Ollie Watkins is another option. None come close to the England captain's presence and international experience. Left back is also a concern with nobody claiming the spot.

To face group L, England will have to be prepared. They will see familiar foes in Croatia and Ghana. Panama will be the final team. The Canaleros appear to be overmatched at first glance, but are likely to give their opponents fits with some aggressive tackling and tight defensive play.

England's match against Croatia is one of the standout fixtures of the group phase. Led by the remarkable Luka Modric, Croatia can be a match for anyone. Modric is now one of the few over 40 players who can still perform at the top level. He has been a key to AC Milan's rise to second in the Serie A this year, playing major minutes while remaining injury free. Younger, but still well past 30 players like Ivan Perisic and Andrej Kramaric continue to have vital roles in the team, too. They will have to manage their minutes to avoid succumbing to the North American summer.

Ghana has been the USA's nemesis in previous World Cups. This time they will take their physical approach to the European giants. Always athletic, it is defensive indiscipline that has held the Black Stars back in previous World Cups. Ghana's attack does include one player the English will know well. Manchester City's Antoine Semenyo attacks from wide positions and will threaten any defense. He moved to City from Bournemouth during the January window for a massive transfer fee and has made an immediate impact.

England, Spain, and Argentina won't have any issues getting through the group phase this summer. All three will want to finish in top spot in order to avoid a possible clash with another contender early in the elimination rounds. Of the three England may have the toughest problem, because group L is matched with group K for the round of 32, meaning there is a strong possibility that Portugal or Colombia await. Argentina and Spain will give us a little preview of what could be a final by meeting for the Finalissima in March. That pits the European Champion Spain against the Copa America champions Argentina. Neither team could have asked for a tougher match as preparation.

DCFC defeats WAZA FLO 16-1

Photos by Adam J. Dewey/ EL CENTRAL PHOTOGRAPHER

The Detroit City FC womens defeated WAZA FLO 16-1, this past Saturday at the Detroit City Fieldhouse for the beginning of there final 3 games of the regular season and 3 game home stand. They will host Youngstown Nighthawks, this Saturday, February 28th at 7:30 pm, then Columbus Eagles FC on Saturday, March 7th at 7:30 pm.

Hannah Crum (#10) intercepts a WAZA FLO pass

Karina Medina (#6) passes the ball upfield to a DCFC teammate

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EL CENTRAL is a weekly publication. The deadline for articles and ads is noon, Monday prior to publication. The opinions and views expressed are not necessarily those of the Publisher or Managing Editor.

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Romulus rechaza futuro centro de detención de ICE

Continuado de la página 1

inmigrantes para procesamiento o deportación.

La confirmación de un futuro centro de detención de inmigrantes a 6 millas del Aeropuerto Metropolitano de Detroit y a 20 millas de Mexicantown llegó como baldazo de agua helada a políticos y residentes en Michigan. Líderes políticos, entre electos y candidatos, así como líderes religiosos, se unieron al sonido de tambores y silbatos de los protestantes para expresar una nada nueva oposición a la agencia migratoria.

Cientos de manifestantes se congregaron la noche del lunes frente al ayuntamiento de Romulus para expresar su rechazo a la propuesta de establecer un centro de ICE dentro de la ciudad.

"Sabemos lo que ocurre cuando los centros de detención de ICE llegan a las comunidades. No solo hacen que nuestra comunidad sea menos segura, sino que están infundiendo terror en nuestras comunidades inmigrantes en toda la región y drenando recursos públicos", dijo el senador estatal Darrin Camilleri hacia la multitud.

Al discurso de Camilleri se unió el del representante de Michigan, Dylan Wegela, quien no solo pidió la abolición y el desmantelamiento de ICE, sino también el enjuiciamiento de quienes, según él, han violado derechos civiles y humanos.

"No quiero que ni un solo dólar de mis impuestos vaya a una agencia que aterroriza vecindarios, con máscaras y sin órdenes judiciales. No quiero que nuestro dinero ganado con esfuerzo vaya a centros de detención conocidos por sus condiciones inhumanas y por registrar cifras récord de muertes el año pasado", dijo Wegela.

Poco después de iniciada la manifestación, un pequeño grupo de contramanifestantes intentó abrirse paso entre gritos al centro de la protesta con un gran cartel que decía "America stands with ICE", lo que encendió los ánimos del grupo principal. Entre los contramanifestantes se encontraban Jayden Scott y Gregor Butzow, ambos de Michigan, quienes han interrumpido protestas anti-ICE, incluso en Minnesota, expresándose contra inmigrantes y musulmanes y apoyando las acciones de ICE.

En medio de empujones, jalones y puñetes, organizadores intentaron, sin éxito, separarlos del grupo, pero parte de la multitud ya estaba exaltada, lo que derivó en insultos y altercados físicos que continuaron hasta el estacionamiento. Durante el forcejeo, manifestantes intentaron quitar el cartel en apoyo a ICE, lo que provocó la caída de Scott. En ese momento, media docena de oficiales de la policía de Romulus dispersaron a la multitud y lo retiraron del lugar entre gritos de "¡Nazis, váyanse a casa!". EL CENTRAL se comunicó con el Departamento de Policía de Romulus para preguntar si hubo arrestos y cuántos, pero al momento de la publicación no había recibido respuesta.

Los candidatos al Senado de EE.UU., Abdul El-Sayed y Mallory McMorrow, también estuvieron presentes para mostrar su desaprobación junto al público. La actual senadora estatal McMorrow acusó al gobierno federal de usar los impuestos en contra de la comunidad y de colocar "policía secreta" en ella. "Necesitamos usar nuestras voces, porque esto es lo que sé: tienen líderes electos en cada nivel, desde el concejo municipal hasta el estatal y el federal. No queremos esto", dijo McMorrow. Por su parte, El-Sayed reiteró su postura de abolir ICE.

Otro político demócrata que criticó el centro de detención propuesto fue el representante estatal Donavan McKinney (D-Detroit), quien afirmó que los residentes viven bajo un gobierno fascista. McKinney, quien postula al Congreso de Michigan por el Distrito 13, acusó a su oponente y actual representante del mismo distrito, Shri Thanedar, de apoyar leyes que favorecieron a ICE. Y aunque Thanedar presentó una petición para impedir la construcción de nuevas instalaciones de ICE en el condado de Wayne, esa acción no convenció al representante estatal.

"Este hombre literalmente votó para agradecer a ICE el verano pasado. También votó un par de veces para aumentar el presupuesto del departamento para ICE. Y luego el mes pasado quiere actuar como si realmente le importara", añadió McKinney.

Más tarde, teniendo el ayuntamiento lleno a su máxima capacidad, los funcionarios locales aprobaron por unanimidad una resolución que se opone formalmente a la instalación del nuevo centro de detención de ICE dentro de los límites de la ciudad. La reunión

Los manifestantes llevan pines con los mensajes "Sé bueno" y "Fuera ICE".

comenzó a las 7:30 p.m., y afuera decenas de manifestantes se agolpaban en la entrada, continuando con gritos y golpes en las ventanas para intentar conseguir un asiento. Entre gritos de "¡Déjennos entrar!", al menos una docena de oficiales de la policía de Romulus custodiaban el interior del edificio.

"Creo que es increíblemente irresponsable que el gobierno federal imponga esta carga a una comunidad más pequeña, desatendida y ya sobrecargada en este momento", dijo el alcalde de Romulus, Robert

McCraight. "Seguiremos luchando todo lo que podamos y haremos lo posible para asegurarnos de que esto no tenga un impacto negativo en nuestra comunidad".

Una carta enviada por McRaight a la secretaria del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, Kristi Noem, citó preocupaciones de ubicación, ya que el 7525 de Cogswell Street está cerca de áreas residenciales y escuelas, y la ciudad no podría proporcionar recursos de seguridad pública en presencia de una instalación de ICE. También señaló que los requisitos de infraestructura de un centro de detención prohibirían la instalación, dado que actualmente la propiedad está zonificada para "industrias ligeras" que "tienen menos impacto en los usos circundantes y generan menos tráfico de camiones".

"Por todas estas razones, la Ciudad de Romulus objeta la existencia de un Centro de Detención de ICE y solicita respetuosamente que no se ubique un Centro de Detención de ICE en la ciudad", concluye la carta, también enviada el 16 de febrero a funcionarios locales, estatales y federales.

Para "JR", de la organización No Detention Centers MI, la oposición de los residentes y autoridades de Romulus hacia ICE es plausible, pero considera que será necesario un esfuerzo prolongado para frenar la propuesta.

"Hemos visto que ICE está intentando eludir a los funcionarios electos locales y las regulaciones, y está avanzando con estos planes horribles de detención en almacenes a pesar de la oposición generalizada, lo que refleja la cultura de violencia y la total falta de transparencia que asociamos con esta agencia", dijo JR a EL CENTRAL.

Los miembros del Concejo aplaudieron la resolución y expresaron que ya han tenido suficiente. "El mensaje es claro. Y si esto no envía un mensaje fuerte sobre cómo nos sentimos, no sé qué lo hará", dijo la alcaldesa interina Tina Talley. "Estamos agotando todas las vías en este asunto". El concejal William Wadsworth añadió que no hay razón para una instalación de ICE en Romulus. "No tengo problema con que se deporten a inmigrantes indocumentados con antecedentes penales", dijo. "Pero lo que he visto en los últimos meses en la televisión me revuelve el estómago".

El alcalde McCraight concluyó que mientras él ocupe el cargo de alcalde de Romulus, la ciudad no emitirá ningún permiso ni certificado de ocupación para la instalación de ICE a menos que un juez federal lo ordene.

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SPECIAL WORLD'S CULTURES

Bolivia

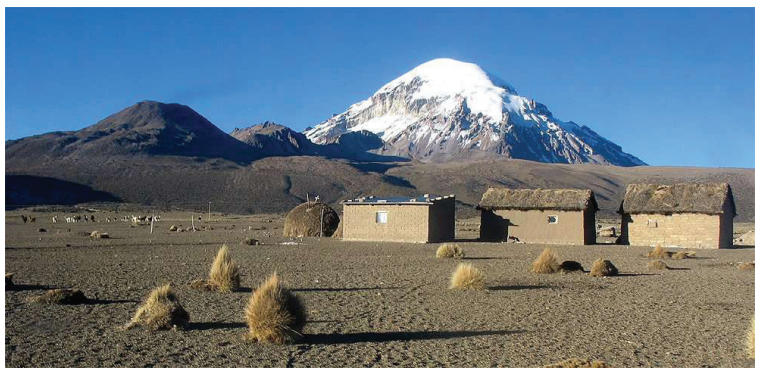
Sajama National Park

Bolivia, home to the Salar de Uyuni and one of the countries through which the Andes mountain range passes, boasts more than 10 mountains, peaks, and volcanoes that rise above 6,000 meters above sea level (m.a.s.l.), the highest being the Sajama volcano in the Andes.

The name Sajama comes from the Aymara language, as the Aymara people are the second largest in Bolivia, after the Quechua. Thus, the name Sajama originates from Aymara words; however, it has not been determined whether it corresponds to the concept of Chak Xaña, meaning "distant," or Chak-jjaña, meaning "west."

The snow-capped Sajama volcano is located in the Bolivian Altiplano within Sajama National Park, where other peaks of the mountain range are also found. The community of Sajama, located at the foot of the snow-capped Sajama volcano at an elevation of 4,238 meters above sea level, is surrounded by other mountains that reflect the surrounding landscape like mirrors, as well as geysers from which hot water erupts, transforming this otherwise cold place into a haven of warm surprises. The town of Sajama has fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, yet it is able to accommodate and provide basic necessities to tourists seeking hiking and mountaineering experiences, whether on the Sajama volcano, or on the Cholcani or Pomerape volcanoes.

In Sajama National Park, you can find exceptional animal species, such as chinchillas, a whiskered rabbit-squirrel. You can also see vicuñas, which are smaller than llamas, even smaller than alpacas.



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ESPECIAL CULTURAS DEL MUNDO,
by Mariana Ayón RV

Bolivia

Melissa Sauma Vaca Melissa Sauma Vaca (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 1987) is a poet and photographer. She has published Luminiscencia (2017, Editorial 3600 and 2017, Editorial Llamarada Verde), which received the National Prize for New Writers from the Santa Cruz Book Chamber in 2017, and Maneras de parar el mundo (2021, El Ángel Editor and 2022, Editorial Llamarada Verde).

Everything in everything

To think that everything is made of the same thing:
of us

that on the ground I walk on the bones of my children
will be dissolved
when I am nothing more than a phrase written
in what was once part of a forest.

That everything that exists is formed
of the same matter in different proportions
and a small exercise of chance is what determines
that the rose is a rose and the lynx is a lynx.

That within each atom of my being is contained
the emptiness contained within the atoms of every other creature
that this is the substance we share
that which separates and unites us.

That in the earth and water and air and fire
lies the record of the past and the future
and everything we build is part of something that already exists
and will continue to exist when we are gone.

That we never truly leave
that we continue to journey through the flow of life
as a fossil, a snow-capped peak, a cloud, or a river.

People under the rain

Those who run because of the myth accepted in childhood
those who cover their heads with the shopping list
or with a brown paper envelope
those who sense that covering up is useless
those who read poems under plump drops
that slide down, deforming the book
and will say that the figures the ink drips
are also poetry
those who flee from the rain as from anything
that might disturb the order
those who look for the sun on the other side of the clouds
and stare back at the light, waiting for the rainbow
[...] those who dance
before, during, and after the rain
those who sing for it to rain, for it to stop raining, because it has rained
[...] those who hope it doesn't last long because they have so much to do
those who don't realize it has rained
until the river overflows
and they have to move to another country
and there's no time left
to pack
or say goodbye
to the neighbors.

ESPECIAL CULTURAS DEL MUNDO

Bolivia

Parque Nacional Sajama

Bolivia, casa del Salar de Uyuni y uno de los países por los que pasa la cordillera andina, lo que le ha dado más de 10 montañas, picos y volcanes que se elevan por encima de los 6,000 metros sobre el nivel del mar (m.s.n.m.), siendo el más elevado el volcán de Sajama, en la cordillera andina.

El nombre de Sajama proviene de la lengua aymara, pues, siendo en Bolivia el pueblo Aymara el segundo más importante, detrás del Quéchua. Así, el nombre de Sajama tiene origen en palabras aymaras, no obstante, no se ha logrado definir si responde al concepto Chak Xaña, que significa "distante", o bien, Chak-jjaña que significa "oeste".

El volcán nevado de Sajama se encuentra en el altiplano boliviano en el Parque Nacional Sajama, donde también se encuentran otros picos de la cordillera.

La comunidad de Sajama, que se encuentra a las faldas del volcán nevado Sajama, a una elevación de 4,238 m.s.n.m., rodeada de otras montañas que fungen como espejos, así como géisers de donde brota el agua caliente, haciendo de aquel sitio frío, un espacio de sorpresas cálidas.

La población Sajama cuenta con menos de 1,000 habitantes, mas es capaz de recibir y proveer de básicos a los turistas de la zona que buscan experiencias de senderismo y alpinismo ya sea hacia el Nevado de Sajama, o bien, al volcán Cholcani o el Pomerape.

En el Parque Nacionala de Sajama se encuentran especies de animales excepcionales, como son los chinchillones, una especie de conejo-ardillas bigotonas. También se ven las vicuñas, que son más pequeñas que las llamas, incluso menores que las alpacas.

Tell them you saw it in Diles que lo viste en
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Poesía boliviana

Melissa Sauma Vaca (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 1987) es Poeta y fotógrafa. Ha publicado Luminiscencia (2017, Editorial 3600 y 2017, Editorial Llamarada Verde), que recibió el Premio Nacional Noveles Escritores de la Cámara del Libro de Santa Cruz, 2017, y Maneras de parar el mundo (2021, El Ángel Editor y 2022, Editorial Llamarada Verde).

Todo en todo

Pensar que todo está hecho de lo mismo:
de nosotros

que en el suelo que piso estarán disueltos
los huesos de mis hijos
cuando yo no sea más que una frase escrita
en lo que un día fuera parte de un bosque.

Que todo cuanto existe está formado
de una misma materia en distintas proporciones
y un pequeño ejercicio del azar es el que determina
que la rosa sea rosa y el lince sea lince.

Que en cada átomo de mi ser está contenido
el vacío contenido en los átomos de cualquier otra criatura
que es esa la sustancia que compartimos
lo que nos separa y unifica.

Que en la tierra y el agua y el aire y el fuego
está la bitácora del pasado y del futuro
y todo lo que construimos es parte de algo que ya existe
y seguirá existiendo cuando nos hayamos ido.

Que no nos vamos nunca
que seguimos transitando el fluir de la vida
como fósil, nevado, nube o río.

Personas bajo la lluvia
Los que corren por el mito aceptado en la infancia
los que se cubren la cabeza con la lista del mercado
o con un sobre de papel madera tamaño oficio
los que intuyen que cubrirse es inútil
los que leen poemas bajo orondas gotas
que resbalan deformando el libro
y dirán que las figuras que la tinta escurre
son también poesía
los que huyen de la lluvia como de cualquier cosa
que acaso pudiera alterar el orden
los que buscan el sol en el reverso de las nubes
y miran a contraluz esperando el arcoíris
los que siempre llevan un paraguas bajo el brazo
los que venden paraguas
[...] los que bailan
antes, durante y después de la lluvia
los que cantan
para que llueva, para que deje de llover, porque ha llovido
los que ven llover desde la galería y escriben sobre la lluvia
[...] los que catalogan a las personas en situaciones de lluvia
los que escriben tratados de supervivencia a diluvios
los que ponen música y suben el volumen a la melancolía
los que escuchan en la lluvia una música
los que esperan que dure poco porque tienen que hacer mucho
los que no perciben que ha llovido
hasta que el río desborda
y hay que mudarse de país
y ya no hay tiempo
para hacer maletas
o despedirse
de los vecinos.

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SAT MAR 7 — ROBUST EDUCATION AND YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES
9:30 AM to 12:30 PM | Boys & Girls Clubs of SE Michigan

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